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Forest Entomology Brief 55.

DEFOLIATION OF DECIDUOUS TREES.

Leaf eating by caterpillars, similar insect larvae, and adult beetles is the most evident, frequently observed, and often complained of form of insect attack on shade and ornamental trees. A single defoliation of trees which naturally lose their leaves in the autumn is not a very serious injury, particularly when it occurs in late summer. Trees so defoliated usually leaf out the next year and show little or no ill effect from the attack. When the leaf eating occurs early in the year, completely strips the trees, and is continued year after year, the results will be more serious. The trees may be stunted or deformed or may die, either from exhaustion or as a result of other insect injuries.

Leaf-eating injury to shade and ornamental trees and shrubs may be prevented to a great extent by thoroughly spraying the trees, about the time the young caterpillars or other insects first appear, with a lead arsenate solution, prepared according to the directions in Forest Entomology Brief 40.

Some accessory methods are also available for successful use under certain conditions or for some species of defoliators, such as clipping off infested foliage with a long tree pruner and burning; burning webs and caterpillar masses with an ignited kerosene-soaked rag on a pole (care being used not to scorch or burn the bark); crushing clustering caterpillars; banding trees with a sticky tree-banding material; burning or otherwise destroying egg masses and cocoons. Advice concerning the use of these methods can of course only be given when the insect attacking the tree is positively known as the result of an examination of specimens submitted, or, in rare instances, when descriptions given are sufficiently accurate for recognition. Any of the accessory methods suggested above when underlined are considered advisable in combating the species involved.

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